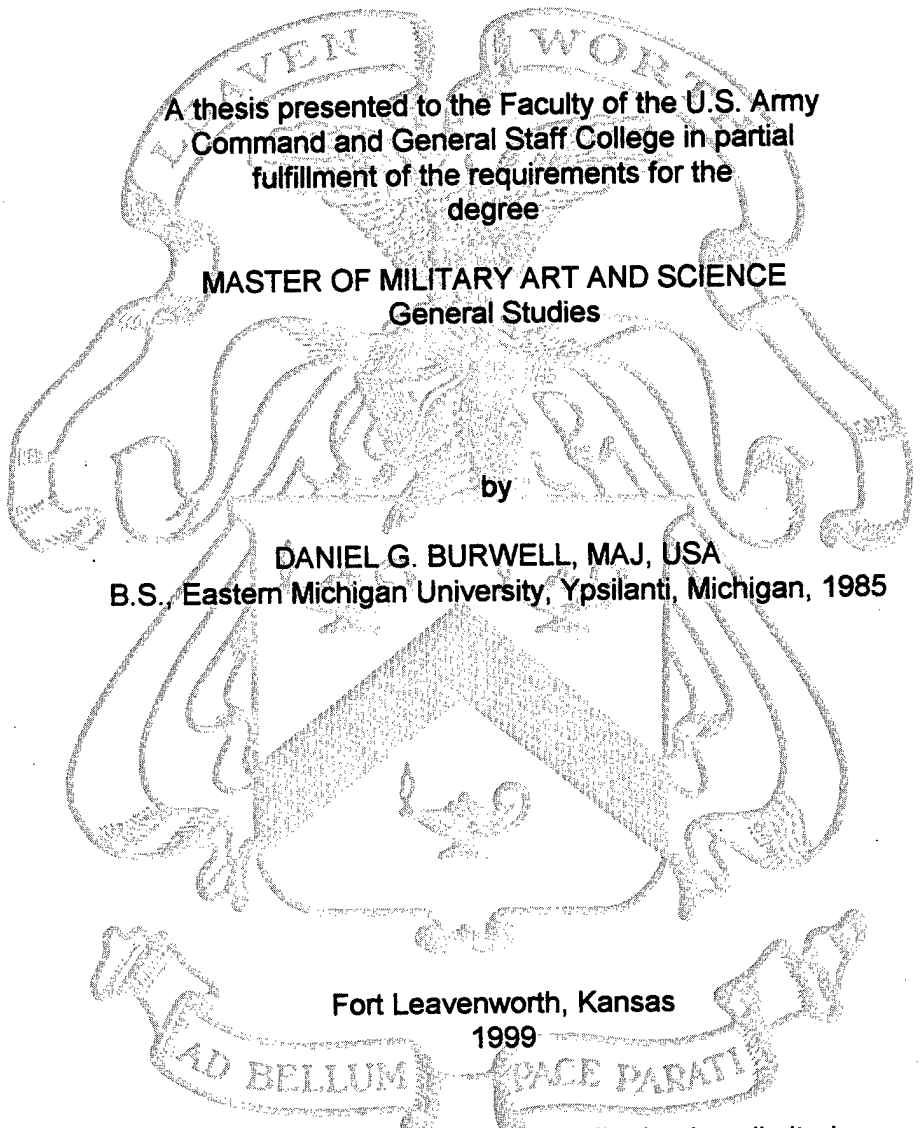
SPECIAL FORCES ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR FORCE XXI



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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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This study has evaluated the current Special Forces Assessment and Selection program by analyzing the functions of recruiting, assessing, and selecting soldiers for Special Forces Qualification training. Critical attributes and psychological screening tools that are used during assessment and selection were reviewed for validity. In addition, a review of the program design was necessary to determine whether or not Special Forces are selecting promising candidates for service in the future. Several observations were identified during the course of this research. For example, the critical attributes utilized for assessment are derived from the Army core values. Special Forces want soldiers who embody the Army value system and live the Army ethic. Also, a re-engineering of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection board and evaluation process is necessary to grow the quality needed for Force XXI.

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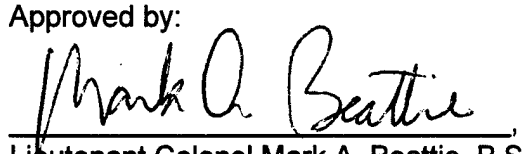 , Thesis Committee Chairman
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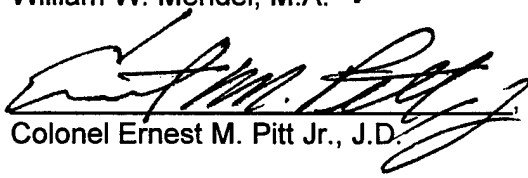 , Consulting Faculty
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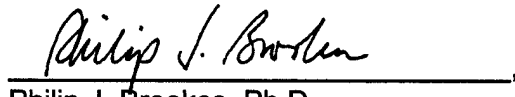 , Director, Graduate Degree Programs
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

SPECIAL FORCES ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR FORCE XXI, by Major Daniel G. Burwell, U.S. Army, 78 pages.

This study has evaluated the current Special Forces Assessment and Selection program by analyzing the functions of recruiting, assessing, and selecting soldiers for Special Forces Qualification training. Critical attributes and psychological screening tools that are used during assessment and selection were reviewed for validity. In addition, a review of the program design was necessary to determine whether or not Special Forces are selecting promising candidates for service in the future. Several observations were identified during the course of this research. For example, the critical attributes utilized for assessment are derived from the Army core values. Special Forces want soldiers who embody the Army value system and live the Army ethic. Also, a re-engineering of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection board and evaluation process is necessary to grow the quality needed for Force XXI.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APFT	Army Physical Fitness Test
ARI	Army Research Institute
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
C2	Command and Control
CINC	Commander in Chief
CMF	Career Management Field
GT	General Technical
MMPI	Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory
MOS	Military Occupational Skill
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OSS	Offices of Strategic Services
REF	Regional Engagement Force
SAS	Special Air Services
SF	Special Forces
SFAS	Special Forces Assessment and Selection
SFDOQC	Special Forces Detachment Officers Qualification Course
SFQC	Special Forces Qualification Course
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SWCS	Special Warfare Center and School

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the issues that surround the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) program. The question is whether the Army is recruiting, assessing, and selecting the right soldier, with concern for the development or refinement of the critical attributes necessary for selection of U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) soldiers, who will continue to meet the special operational needs of Force XXI.

There is presently considerable debate as to whether or not Special Forces is "picking" the right soldier. What should be the profile of a prospective candidate for the future?

Special Forces is in the midst of a cultural and organizational evolution. As a combat arm the branch is facing changes in global dynamics, downsizing, and the introduction of different tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) in concert with a new battlefield environment, called "digitization."

The Special Operations Forces (SOF) community has always placed great emphasis on the type and quality of its people. One of the primary goals has been to develop a cost-effective process for selecting and manning the force, ensuring that the right soldier has the requisite skills and aptitude for the right job in Special Forces (SF).

Background

What is SFAS? This refers to the method of selection of Special Forces personnel career management field (CMF) 18. This career field includes positions concerned with the employment of highly specialized elements of men to accomplish specially directed missions in times of both peace and war.

Many of these missions are conducted at times when employment of conventional military forces are not feasible or are not considered in the best interest of the United States. Training for, and participation in, these missions is arduous, somewhat hazardous and often politically or otherwise sensitive in nature.

For these reasons, every prospective "Green Beret" must successfully complete the three-week Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) course. Throughout this course, soldiers are assessed, and those who are successful are selected for attendance at the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC). This program (SFAS) allows SF an opportunity to assess each soldier's capabilities by testing his physical, emotional, and mental stamina before he is assigned against the strength of a Special Forces Group. SFAS also allows each soldier the opportunity to make a meaningful and educated decision about SF and his individual career plan.

Indeed, the most important component for success in the Army's SF missions is the people committed to them. Special Forces is continually seeking new and innovative ways to select the right people. All of the major programs for the future start with the premise that the right people are in the right place with the right training, if SF are to succeed (Downing 1996, 3).

Army Special Forces places a strong emphasis on the quality of its soldiers. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) is responsible for the selection of these soldiers. This organization goes to great lengths to ensure that it has selected individuals who possess the personal attributes required to accomplish the SF missions.

It is the current SF mission that dictates the personal attributes required in a SF soldier. Consequently, these attributes are the impetus behind the selection of these soldiers. The vehicle used to test, assess, and select the potential Special Forces

soldier then, is the SFAS. SFAS is "a sequential process of testing and evaluating soldiers with different measuring tools to determine which soldiers possess sufficient levels of the attributes required to be operationally successful" (Sanders 1997, 15).

More particularly, the goal of SFAS is to select individuals who possess the attributes needed not only to successfully complete the SFQC, but also to select those who will succeed in the Special Forces operational groups.

The original purpose of the course was twofold: (1) "to provide highly suitable soldiers for Special Forces"(Velky 1990, 12-15); and (2) to prevent the Army from wasting money and training resources on individuals who are not compatible with Special Forces training and duty (Velky 1990, 12-15).

The basic purpose of any assessment and selection program is to identify individuals who are suited to perform a specific function or job. If this is done, it seems idiomatic that valuable resources will not be wasted on unqualified individuals and that efficiency and effectiveness will increase. Accomplishing this, in turn, requires a valid set of selection criteria (attributes) and a relevant set of testing methods.

The logic behind assessment and selection is that once an individual is properly selected, he can then be trained to perform a specific task. This organization selects individuals believing that if it has found the appropriate person for the job, then only a tailored training program stands between the individual and his ability to perform a specific task; in this case, selecting a soldier who can be trained to perform Special Forces missions. Individual suitability, in short, is a major factor in the success of any organization. The Army Special Forces is no exception.

The purpose of SFAS is therefore to identify soldiers who have potential for SF training. The program has two phases. The first phase assesses a soldier's physical fitness, motivation, and his ability to cope with stress. Activities in this phase include:

psychological tests, physical fitness and swim test, runs, obstacle courses, rucksack marches, and military orientation exercises. An evaluation board meets after the first phase to determine which candidates are allowed to continue in the program. The second phase assesses leadership and teamwork skills. After these two phases, another, final board meets to select those soldiers who may attend the SFQC, and the Special Forces Detachment Officers Qualification Course (SFDOQC).

The very nature of Special Forces missions requires that soldiers be carefully selected. Special Forces missions are conducted by small groups of men, usually twelve or less, whose missions have strategic and or operational significance. These men provide the war fighting Commander in Chief (CINC) an economical, flexible, and low-visibility option for conducting sensitive missions across the entire spectrum of conflict. A Special Forces soldier is often placed at the "tip of the spear," where his actions spell success or failure.

The Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) often conducts missions unilaterally with little or no direct supervision. The ODA is expected to produce results that are far greater than would ordinarily be expected from its number of men. Special Forces soldiers cannot be mass-produced or created during a crisis (Joint Pub 3-05 1998). It is, therefore, critical that the selection process for these soldiers and officers be germane, exact, and precise.

Given the strategic importance of many Special Forces missions and the level of responsibility that the officer is charged with, it is also crucial that the Special Forces officer be chosen correctly.

When reporting to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a soldier should be in excellent physical shape. Any of the following reasons might cause a prospective candidate stress while attending SFAS: his spouse is not in agreement with him; financial problems

at home; medical problems; low self-esteem or lack of motivation; not in top physical shape for SFAS; or, equivocal commitment to SF.

Research Question

The research question that this thesis will attempt to answer is: Is the Army using the right tools to recruit, assess, and select the right soldiers for U.S. Army Special Forces to meet the special operational needs of the future as defined by *ARSOF Force XXI*?

Inherent in the research question is perhaps three subordinate questions:

1. Should the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course select for success in the field, rather than merely select for success in the Special Forces Qualification Course?

2. Assuming only arguendo, that the answer to subparagraph a. is in the affirmative, how then should the selection course be changed to provide the force with the most suitable, best-qualified and capable Special Forces soldier?

Scope of Research

Actually, the research effort here necessarily involves an attempt to identify, define and refine those "critical attributes" necessary for selection of U.S. Army SF soldiers for Force XXI.

Little critical analysis of the incumbent attributes and testing methods of the SFAS program has been made. A great deal of research in the area of increasing the selection rate, without lowering the standards, has been conducted by the Army Research Institute (ARI) and SWCS. One reason for this is because the overall attrition rate in SFAS is very high, 56.5 percent (Hazlett 1998, Interview).

With such a high attrition rate, it is easy to conclude that the program is a success. Apparently only the best soldiers are advancing to actual Special Forces training. Another reason for this assumption is the high overall graduation rate, 85 percent, (Hazlett 1998, Interview) in the SFQC where the training of the Special Forces soldiers and officers is conducted. The high attrition rate in SFAS coupled with a very high graduation rate in SFQC suggests that SFAS is a success. Still, one seems compelled to ask, under the current SFAS program, are the most qualified being selected, according to the current testing methods and the need for tomorrow's missions?

Methodology

The methodology used in this project is a combination of hypothesis testing and program evaluation. Each area is examined and explained in detail in the following chapters.

Data Collection

This project relies on an in-depth literature review. The interview data collected is primary in nature and is described below.

Objectives and Rationale

Qualification of data: It was important to draw specific conclusions from those interviewed and to offer an unbiased approach to the study of creating a standardized approach to defining SF needs for Force XXI. The survey provided data instrumental in ascertaining the extent to which commanders believed they were receiving the best qualified soldier from the Special Forces training pipeline. The information received from the interviews further explains the present status of SF recruitment, as well as selection and assessment in general.

There were various discussions that ensued during the interview process. The information gathered from many individuals was very valuable and significant to this study.

Assumptions

1. SF assessment and selection will continue to be an integral component of filling the force structure of Special Forces for Force XXI.

2. SF will continue to rapidly evolve through Force XXI and beyond, and Special Forces missions, organization, and capabilities will be fluid and dynamic.

Limitations

Assessing and selecting men for assignment to Special Forces units are still an uncertain science. Documentation of individuals' assessment packets, who have applied to Special Forces, was not well kept, stored, and, for the most part, was unavailable until March 1996.

However, psychological profiles have always been recorded and entered into databases for statistical research. Statistics regarding Special Forces' assessment and selection are often incomplete or inaccurate. This will impact on the author's ability to draw accurate conclusions based on statistical analysis. However, sufficient information is available in order to establish trends.

Various obstacles hindered drawing succinct scientific conclusions. The following factors limited overall effectiveness:

1. Insignificant differences in data
2. Construction of a completely unbiased interview outline
3. The interpretation of information
4. Data collection (target population) and interview sources

5. Human nature

The author tried to conduct this study with an open mind, attempting to suppress any preconceived ideas about the topic. The intent was to learn as much as possible about the SFAS and to endeavor to develop sound advice and or solutions on issues identified within the current system. The study could well lend itself to the further research of many variables regarding Special Forces assessment and selection.

Delimitations

This study will focus only upon the Special Forces Assessment and Selection program at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from 1988 to the present.

Selection programs referring to the Office of Strategic Services, the 22nd Special Air Service Regiment, or the Australian Special Air Service Regiment are mentioned only when an overlap exists among the different programs.

The 1990s brought many new ideas about how Special Forces should be employed during peacetime engagement missions, contingency operations and war; but, more specifically, how they should be employed as a regional engagement force of choice within the context of *ARSOF Force XXI because* "Special Forces" under *ARSOF vision* for *Force XXI,* as a Regional Engagement Force (REF).

They will maintain their current capabilities, but under the auspices of peacetime engagement, act as global scouts, strategic shapers and the nation's early warning system around the world. It seems logical to assume that as new force structures are considered in preparation for *Force XXI*, there may be new requirements for the assessment and selection of Special Forces personnel.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study may assist in understanding the process of assessment and selection of Special Forces. It is conceivable that the information contained within this thesis will be utilized to design and implement other selection programs of a similar nature.

The author has a personal interest in SOF units and how they will "grow the force" to meet "tomorrow's challenges" within the context of the new millennium. Upon graduation from CGSC, the author will be serving in future assignments in the Special Operations community and use information derived from this research to assist in his duties.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

General

The purpose of this study was an effort to determine whether Special Forces are using the proper tools in the recruiting, assessment, selection, and training of candidates for Force XXI. Force XXI, of course, is the label given to the anticipated needs and mission(s) required of Special Forces during the twenty-first century. Having reviewed bibliographic indexes, published books, journals, and periodicals, it became obvious that while these are a beginning, precious little theory or research has been published that directly addresses this subject.

Consequently, it is necessary and perhaps beneficial to also rely in part on unpublished studies and on interviews and the experiences of those who have been directly involved in the process. Their opinions as to the relative success or failure of these methods implemented in the field should be valuable to consider as well.

However, documented experiences are also limited. The Special Forces Assessment and Selection program is relatively recent in terms of its formal origin but to date has had a significant impact upon both the Special Forces branch and the United States Army as a whole.

While this study was being conducted, the Force XXI Special Forces Group design is still limited to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, and itself is still in the testing stages of implementation. To insure that a critical review of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) program would remain relevant in the future, the existing training systems, psychological testing tools and program analysis and design were used as a foundation for this study. It is a current belief that SFAS works to meet today's needs, but the question is whether it will meet those needs ten to

twenty years from now. In an effort to find answers to the question, the thesis must begin with an incremental literature review.

Concept of the Literature Review

The author first attempted to develop a broad understanding of Force XXI and of Special Forces force structure as it is presently. This review focused on the problem statement and analysis of the current selection methodology. Published materials were gathered to this end, hoping to gain knowledge from the broader perspective to the more finite one. This information provided the background data in chapter 1; the research method in chapter 3; the conceptual input necessary for analysis in chapter 4, and the final recommendations and conclusions in chapter V.

Books

No single book specifically addresses the issues surrounding the present goals of Special Forces Assessment and Selection and the needs of Force XXI. Nor, was any book specifically focused in terms of recruiting, assessing, and qualifying candidates for service in tomorrow's Special Forces. Several books do make references to the selection issue in their discussion of Special Forces, but none tie the topic to the future needs of Special Forces or Force XXI. Books, however, were most helpful in providing background information and historical chronology pertaining to the need and development of Special Forces.

A. H. Paddock Jr. documents the historical evolution of Special Forces from the original clandestine operators of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in his book, *US Army Special Warfare: Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952*. He illuminates the need for units with special capabilities above and beyond those of conventional forces. He describes factual information regarding the original selection

of the members and their service in the OSS. Also, he makes reference to the discussion of unity of effort between psychological operations and unconventional operations and concludes that this is critical. Finally, Paddock acknowledges that a specialized form of selection is required to maintain the quality and capability of elite forces. This book clearly explains the foundation for the specialized Special Forces selection process.

The book *Army Special Forces: From Boot Camp to the Battle Zones*, written by Ian Padden, documents a historic overview of the process of recruiting, selecting, and training Special Forces soldiers and their service in combat. It describes in detail the rigors and commitment necessary to select, train, and to build specialized forces. Padden does make several observations about the role of Special Forces prior to 1982, and their necessity in the future.

Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years: A History of the U.S. Army Special Forces, by C. M. Simpson III, provides a detailed study of Special Forces and their use throughout the world, in particular in Vietnam, from 1958-1967. Simpson draws upon President John F. Kennedy's vision for Special Forces to explain continued interest in unconventional warfare and their capability as an unconventional, low profile tool of choice during the cold war period. The book makes several observations about the role of the advisory assistance effort, and Simpson also provides an important chronological analysis of Special Forces.

Raiders of Elite Infantry?: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppa to Grenada, written by D. W. Hogan Jr., describes the various emotional and stereotypical constructs about the words, "Special Forces" in the minds of both soldiers and civilians. Hogan explains that the words alone serve to complicate the perception of capabilities, and to frustrate one's ability to understand the actual roles and uses of

Special Forces and its soldiers. He analyzes Special Forces roles, missions, and small unit organizations in history as being nation builders and as forces that are utilized throughout the entire spectrum of conflict from peacetime to war, in the historical context. Hogan's book was useful for research, since it provides a cornerstone in understanding Special Forces and their development of capabilities.

Carpenter R. Hogan, Bernadine and Bownas analyze several factors surrounding the selection of personnel within an organization to promote the right worker skill sets, requisite aptitude to do the job effectively, and sustain workplace cohesion in their book Personality Assessment and Personnel Selection: Personality Assessment in Organizations. This book suggests the use of psychological assessment and other selection tools to qualify hiring trends regarding other organizations. The various techniques and measures that are described, such as intelligence testing and personality profiles are consistent with today's Special Forces Assessment and Selection program. These methods proved to be useful for this study.

In his book From the OSS to the Green Beret: The Birth of Special Forces, Aaron Bank addresses the transition from the OSS framework to the development of the Special Forces force structure. Bank explains the historical relevance of modern Special Forces in contemporary times. He explains the ways, ends, and means by which the initial build-up of Special Forces occurred, and how their selection, training and employment became a necessity to contain the spread of communism. He states that this was essential to coincide with the policy of the era. This book gives one an appreciation for the struggle Special Forces endured within the conventional Army of that time.

The books A MMPI Handbook, Volume I and II. Clinical Interpretations and Research Applications written by W. G.Dahlstrom, and L. E. Dahlstrom, explain the use

of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, or (MMPI), and how to interpret findings gained from the use of this testing tool. These books discuss both the shortfalls and benefits surrounding the use of the test. Volume II discusses various research applications and uses for the test. The use of this test regarding standard profile parameters and interpretations helped to screen out potential ineffective people from SF. These books are of particular value for understanding the potential testing of Special Forces candidates.

In L. B. Christiansen's book, *Experimental Psychology*, he discusses the concepts of experimental psychology, testing methodology, behavior modification, test reliability in terms of false positives, and assessments. This book was of particular value to the author in understanding the design principles utilized in developing the MMPI for Special Forces Assessment and Selection.

The book Handbook of Military Psychology, written by R. Gal and A. D. Mangelsdorff, explained the psychological impacts of military service and provided a bedrock foundation for making inferences and assumptions about the validity of today's Special Forces Assessment and Selection program.

The book The MMPI-2/MMPI: An Interpretive Manual is a guide to the interpretation of the multi-phasic personality inventory (MMPI-2) and (MMPI) written by R. L. Green. The MMPI-2 is said to have greater reliability when evaluating psychometric properties relative to the selection of Special Forces candidates. The MMPI has been utilized in Special Forces since 1988 and more than 8,000 personnel have tested. Both the MMPI and MMPI-2 are clinical instruments that require interpretation to effectively screen out candidates who do not have the potential to make it through qualification training. This book defined the differences and subsequent uses of the MMPI-2 for Special Forces selection.

The book, MMPI-2: Assessing Personality and Psychopathology, written by J. R. Graham, describes pathologies that are not consistent with the type of personality profile Special Forces must select for the force. It explains how the MMPI-2 should be used to efficiently screen out individuals in advance of training. Graham indicates that the MMPI has a long history of use as an assessment tool for military personnel. Beginning in World War II, investigators used the MMPI to predict successful graduation from military schools or to discriminate between various groups of personnel. This book clearly establishes the value of the MMPI-2 and convinces this author, that it should remain as an integral part of pre-assessment testing for Special Forces candidates.

The book Wonderlick Personality Test & Scholastic Level Exam's: User's Manual, by the Wonderlick Personality Test Corporation, was instrumental in understanding other facets of testing Special forces candidates. The Wonderlick test is given to prospective Special Forces candidates after their application, and it determines whether or not they have suitable aptitude and intelligence to pass qualification training. This test is given at the front end of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course. However, if the intelligence score of the candidate is below acceptable norms, the candidate currently may still continue through the selection program.

Government Documents

There have been several government studies conducted regarding the issue of Special Forces selection. Many of them have been commissioned by the SWCS, and the United States Special Operations Command (USASOC) located at Fort Bragg. The great majority of these were accomplished by only two agencies: The Defense Technical Institute and the United States Army Research Institute. The studies pertaining to this thesis are divided into two broad categories: First, the development of preliminary screening measures, which consider both physical and psychological factors for Special

Forces personnel. Second, the future needs of Special Forces structure under the Force XXI model.

In a study conducted by the Defense Research Institute, Factors related to the Effectiveness of Special Forces Personnel, H. I. Abelson describes many of the attributes necessary for effective Special Forces personnel. He delineates between "effective" and "ineffective" personality attributes and the validity of the MMPI as a screening tool specifically for Special Forces. This study was of primary interest, because the personality profile utilized by Abelson, was developed in 1954, at a time when the Cold War was preeminent in U.S. strategy. Unconventional warfare and clandestine operations were at the forefront during that era.

Many argue (as does Colonel Mark Boyett, Assistant Commandant, SWCS, in a personal interview, in 1999) that unconventional warfare is what makes Special Forces special or unique. He argues that no other branch is capable of conducting long-term missions through, with, and by indigenous people.

This would suggest that the attribute profile set is still relevant today. Special Forces missions, such as Coalition Support Team (CST) and operating within multinational environments, are common place and require the very same capabilities in cross cultural communications, as the Special Forces' forefathers needed to be effective.

Combat Selection and Special Forces Manpower Problems: Status Report (Research Study 63-2), written by R. G. Berkhouse, addresses the relevance of Special Forces recruiting and selection and the difficulty involved in maintaining the force. Berkhouse discusses the fact that attrition rates within the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC), which have sustained levels of only 40 to 70 percent since the late 1950s. Because of the high attrition rate, as well as several other factors, Special Forces began developing assessment and selection programs to study potential Special

Forces personnel and to provide recommendations for a more effective candidate selection and qualification course operation.

Berkhouse claims that these periodic manpower shortages during war, and force structure drawdowns during peacetime have actually limited the need for personnel assessment and selection investigations.

E. L. George and P. D. Cassidy in Training Attrition Problem, Institute for Military Assistance (TRASANA TEA-13-81) pointed out that even though a Special Forces selection battery was established in 1981, there has been no significant decrease in attrition. George and Cassidy examined specifically the institutional factors surrounding SFQC attrition, such as the recruiting or training, to see whether they were implicated in the problem. This was important because a closer look identified that there were, within the training environment, a high percentage of academic failures and voluntary withdrawals. The conclusion of the study was that although the instructors possessed adequate skill, they lacked academic teaching skills, and that they were not inspirational role models. In addition they found, that the physical classroom actually inhibited the acquisition of knowledge.

This information was relevant and helped to improve the qualification course, but interestingly, has not significantly done so in terms of the attrition problem (Ellis & Conrad 1948). It is important to note that during this period the "selection" or weeding out was primarily accomplished during phase I of the qualification course. The SFAS program as known today was established at Camp Mackall in 1988.

The Army Research Institute (ARI) Report Preliminary Assessment of Selected Predictors of Special Forces Qualification Course Success, conducted by R. J. Pleban, H. L. Allentoff, and T. J. Thompson, revealed that even though the training environment for Special Forces had changed, the attrition rate remained between 40-50 percent

through 1986. Special Forces was further concerned that even though students passed the SFQC, they seemed to lack the emotional temperament to function as part of a small team.

The research and analysis of these authors was relevant because they were able to address two important areas: (1) the area of intelligence and the introduction of the Wonderlick Personnel Test to define a candidate's aptitude as essential to selection. (2) the Jackson Personality Inventory (JPI) comprised of 15 scales derived from 300 true-false items was essential to determine a candidate's personality profile and level of maturity. The JPI was used as a tool to assess the critical attributes a candidate would need for successful completion of the qualification course. Unfortunately, the reliability of the test is still questionable, due to the continued high attrition rates and false positives.

Job Analysis of Special Forces Jobs (Subject Matter Panel Meetings 31 August and 1 September 1993). Here, T. Russell found that veteran Special Forces personnel believe that interpersonal ability, motivation, and character make a tremendous impact on the development of both the Military Occupational Skill (MOS) and successful field performance.

These attributes then became the predominant issues regarding the selection of Special Forces personnel. From that point forward, Special Forces psychologists; organizational psychologists from the ARI, Department of the Army; and, researchers from Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) would work together to improve the tools for examining a SF candidate's personality traits and critical attributes.

Journals, Periodicals, and Articles

Numerous articles applicable to this study can be divided into two categories: those articles pertaining to SFAS from 1988 to present, and those articles addressing

the future of Force XXI and appearing in professional military journals. These articles are of special interest, because they attempt to answer some of the same issues this study will resolve.

J. R. Fricke's article, "The Special Forces Qualification Course" (PB 80-90-1). Special Warfare (3(1), 4-11, 1990), is important to this study because his article amplifies the need for a selection course prior to attendance at the qualification course. Fricke explains, that the training required for a soldier or officer to become a member of a Special Forces operational detachment has evolved into one of the most advanced, costly, and time-consuming military training programs in the world.

Fricke's point was well made; in recent years many have become interested in the cost of Special Forces training. In fact, the whole impetus in the development of the SFAS program is now twofold: (1) To insure that the Army is putting the best-qualified soldier with the most potential for completing the qualification course into training; and (2) To conserve diminishing resources and to train only those with the greatest potential for success. Prior to 1988, soldiers received orders for permanent change of station (PCS) to attend the qualification course. With high attrition and the norm, the Army lost millions of dollars, because those who failed then had to be moved back into the conventional Army, all at government expense.

J. A. Guest's article, Special Forces Training: New Initiatives to Enhance the Force (PB80-99-1), Special Warfare, (1(1), 5-11, 1988), emphasizes the need for a preselection course prior to attendance at the qualification course only. Guest describes the initial program design of SFAS. This article is particularly valuable in that it establishes a training pipeline concept from initial screening through completion of language school, while describing in detail the duration of each training phase. Guest

estimate that the preselection course would reduce attrition from 40-50 percent, to 4-5 percent. However, this model would later prove to be false.

In "SFAS: Special Forces Assessment and Selection" (PB 80-90-1), Special Warfare, LTC J. Velky described the framework for the first SFAS program. Velky had surveyed, in person, the British Special Air Service, 22nd Regiment, and designed SFAS around the same objectives as those of the Special Air Service. Because of the large numbers of SFAS candidates, it was thought imperative to design a more objective program; one with an initial period of assessment based on the applicant's individual strength; and with a second period of assessment for his collective strengths.

Velky was an original action officer charged with developing the course for the U.S. Special Warfare Center. This article is highly relevant to the present study to the extent that it explains the "how" and "why" portions of the original core design of SFAS. Furthermore, his study was also useful because it focuses on the unit mission and the functional demands placed on the cadre. The methods described were important considerations undertaken in the refinement of the current Special Forces Assessment and Selection program.

The Colonel Thomas M. Carlen and Dr. Mike Sanders article, "Soldier of the Future: Assessment and Selection of Force XXI," Special Warfare (PB 80-96-2), 9 (2) 1996), was instrumental in understanding the new organization of SF in Force XXI. Carlen and Sanders explain how SF assessment and selection methods and techniques may be used not only in future Special Operations Forces, but also how they may be applied Army-wide, as a means of selecting soldiers for the various components of Force XXI.

Carlen and Sanders make the determination that there are three corollaries with respect to assessment and selection of soldiers for Force XXI: First, that the Army

cannot substitute "paper and pencil drills" for sound judgment of leaders who are trained and experienced in the operational environment. Second, that assessment and selection is a dynamic process that requires continual validation. Third, one must take advantage of the human element and maximize human potential, in conjunction with technology, for Force XXI. They argue that if we neglect these corollaries we will fail in our attempt to put the best-suited candidate in the right job.

Although SFAS has slowly evolved over the last decade, most of this change has been internal to the organization. Company G, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group Airborne, instituted many changes during this author's tenure, such as the cadre selection and validation program. The program was designed to improve the quality of the assessors' observations about candidates. However, the individual and collective exercises that the candidates are observed performing have remained unchanged since the formal course was formed in 1988.

Major Sam Young's article, "A Short History of SF Assessment and Selection," Special Warfare ((PB 80-96-2), 9 (2), 22-27,1996) provided a basis for understanding two aspects or approaches to the SFAS program design still used today. Organismic and elementalistic approaches to assessment and selection have evolved over the last fifty years and these techniques are still used today in determining a candidate's suitability for Special Forces. Organismic techniques evaluate an individual's performance on an assigned task, or in a difficult situation. Elementalistic techniques refer to evaluating a person's personality traits through the use of written tests. The OSS used these techniques to select their operators although these approaches were in their infancy then. Nevertheless, these techniques have proven valid over the last five decades.

This article, "Special Forces Entry Level Training: Vision of the Future," written by LTC Manuel Diemer and MAJ Thomas Joyce, Special Warfare ((PB 80-99-1), 12 (1) 2-11), is significant because it describes a two-part strategy for recruiting, assessing, and selecting the right man to attend SFQC. It places direct emphasis on providing the force with reasonably skilled Entry-Level operators, for Force XXI. Diemer and Joyce argue that the current SFAS program of the 80s may need to be revamped to coincide with the today's *SOF Vision statements of 2020 and ARSOF XXI, Operational Concept for the 21st Century.* Their point is, that tests developed to assess one's tolerance for ambiguity, and ones mental agility and flexibility are difficult to design and implement, not to mention costly to administer. The evaluation of mental and character attributes has typically been accomplished in the assessment of mental and physical stamina required in completing the SFAS. Diemer and Joyce believe that these tests do not effectively assess qualities such as, accountability, maturity, stability, intelligence, trustworthiness, or the ability to operate within ambiguous environments.

The thrust of this article is to transition Special Forces within the construct of the training base to be able to better prepare for and to deal with the transnational and asymmetric threats of the future. The SOF community believes that these are the gravest dangers to U.S. national security in the future.

"Special Forces Core Purpose: What vs. How," Special Warfare ((PB 80-96-2), 9 (2), 19, 1999), by Colonel Mark Boyett, argues that Special Forces and conventional forces are growing much closer in their ability to carry out operations that were strictly reserved for Special Forces in the past. He indicates that under *Force XXI* initiatives, conventional forces will be effective and utilized to conduct unilateral *direct action, special reconnaissance, and counter-terrorism* missions. Boyett says that it is the "how",

that will set Special Forces apart. Boyett suggests that Special Forces will carry these missions out through, with or by indigenous populations.

This article is important because it suggests a very specific focus for Special Forces. The content of the article is particularly important in chapter 4 of this study, the "Analysis."

"ARSOF Vision 2010 and ARSOF XXI: An Alternate Viewpoint," Special Warfare ((PB 80-96-2), 9 (2), 26-36, 1999), authored by Major Christopher Tone is an excellent article and important for the following reasons: Tone believes that the *ARSOF 2010 and ARSOF XXI* visions have misaligned the Army's goals with those of conventional forces. He writes that conventional assessments of the future are just "more of the same," ignoring the possibility of asymmetric war with a nonpeer competitor. He charges that decision-makers have neglected four areas of consideration in their development of future visions: (1) He asks, "Why have we discounted the human element?" (2) "Why haven't we calculated recent threats into our vision of the future?" (3) "Why do we think that our future opponents will play by our rules?" and (4) "Why are we ignoring the lessons of history?"

His tone certainly suggests that the current training base is inadequate. He implies that it has prepared soldiers poorly for what they are most likely to see on America's next battlefield or conflict. The implication is further, that the design of our SF training infrastructure is blatantly ahistorical, and if we continue on this azimuth, we will have promoted disaster for future operations.

Because of his questions and implications, this article is highly relevant to this study and to the topic of SF assessment and selection. It is relevant not only because it calls into question our current vision of the future, but also questions the adequacy of training institution to face tomorrow's wars, whatever they may look like. It could have a

significant if not critical impact on the assessment and selection process, of Special Forces.

Conclusion

The review of literature provided the necessary background information to examine SFAS and its relevance to the goals established for Force XXI. The primary question asks, Is Special Forces selecting the right individual for duty under the auspices of *ARSOF FORCE XXI*? To explore possible answers to this question, an incremental literature review was indeed necessary. Data collected about recruiting, screening, and selecting from several sources was instrumental in the development of this study. However, it was a combination of data collected from secondary sources, as well as personal interviews, which provided the focus necessary to complete this study, and to complete the analysis of SFAS, in chapter 4.

Sufficient literature is available to describe the current situation of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course. Special Operations Forces vision for *Force XXI* describes where SF is today, in terms of strength of qualified personnel, and where they need to be for tomorrow. The author's personal experiences as the company commander for SFAS and his personal interviews will form the bases for chapter 5. Other sources of doctrine and manuals provide additional information which may contribute to the author's final recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The study begins with a brief overview of critical attributes presently utilized by United States Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, that are used to assess candidates' applying for Special Forces qualification. A description of the observation report is located in figure 1. This is the main tool through which the cadre records observations about candidates and assess them while they are attending SFAS. Chapter 4 will describe the features and methodology of this tool, and provide an analysis of its effectiveness.

A general analysis of psychological screening tools and their effectiveness will follow the section dedicated to critical attributes in chapter 4. This analysis will lead to a determination of which tests should be used to screen candidates at SFAS, as well as, recommendations and conclusions in chapter 5.

The methodology utilized in this study includes a segment, whereby the author interviewed twenty-one veterans of Special Forces. The interview outline is located in appendix A. Most of the interview subjects have served more than fifteen years at the battalion level in Special Forces units. The information gleaned during the interviews was essential to understanding the *art* of selecting the right person for the job in Special Forces.

The author's interviews revealed that the individuals who were involved responded similarly to the questions about the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course.

In addition to reviewing critical attributes, psychological screening tools, and interviews, chapter 4 examines the SFAS program design. Chapter 4 will point out

some incongruities that exist during the recruiting, screening, assessing and selecting process at SFAS. The program design recommendations found in chapter V are based upon the author's own experience spanning thirteen months as the commander of (SFAS) Company G, First Battalion, First Special Warfare Center and School Airborne.

Finally, Chapter 5, along with recommendations and conclusions, summarizes the findings of this study and offers recommendations to enhance the quality and capability of Special Forces.

This thesis does not explore specific testing standards or "cut-off scores" that must be achieved by the potential Special Forces soldier. Developing selection standards is an entirely separate issue.

The Study Procedure

An interview outline was used to obtain data for the research. The goal of the interview was to ascertain whether or not there were any existing commonalties among the sample population and to determine how well the interviewees understood the selection process. The interviews showed evidence that the sample population had a basic knowledge and understanding of the assessment and selection process.

The individual members of the organizations were extremely diverse in their Special Forces Group affiliation and regional demographics; therefore, statistical analysis was extremely difficult and did not provide solid empirical support for the project. The interview was designed to allow the participant to talk freely and honestly. The author stressed that answers should not contain the names or titles of any persons or organizations. This was necessary to receive candid responses to questions. The interview was structured in order to avoid influencing the response of any participant.

Aspects of this study are interested in obtaining information on how senior special forces personnel perceive the Special Forces Assessment and Selection

program, and if the qualification course was successfully providing them with qualified soldiers; were they getting, in the Special Forces Groups, the caliber soldier they expected?

Special Considerations

The paradigm organization is in a continuous state of operation. The Operational Tempo (OPTEMO) places a tremendous amount of stress on the individual soldier. This lends itself to the special need for sustained motivation and leadership at all levels, because everyone is essential to mission accomplishment. It is imperative that the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the organization be maintained. For this reason the selection attributes for Special Forces soldiers must be consistent and relevant with the mission profile of Special Forces.

Presentation of Results

Significant information from interviews was generated in three separate ways. First, the author received some informal emails after the interview, giving additional input for consideration. Second, while conducting the interview, several discussions were triggered about the topics of "picking the right guy for the job." The "screening out" verses the "screening in" process currently utilized in the selection of personnel.

The author was very careful to remain neutral, while drawing out as much information as possible from some of the participants. Their impromptu interviews and telephone conversations were beneficial in developing the background and emotional aspects of Special Forces Assessment and Selection. People eagerly shared their thoughts on the topic. They talked about what really excited them about today's Special Forces and the quality of their soldiers. They all agreed that there must be a conscious

effort applied to the program to ensure that Special Forces do not become mass-produced.

Inextricably intertwined with the questions previously asked, one must constantly keep in mind the ARSOF Vision 2010, which implies that although war fighting will remain the central mission of the United States armed forces, operations other than war (OOTW) will figure very prominently in the U.S. strategy of peacetime engagement. These are interagency efforts to shape the strategic environment. The military's role in these efforts is regional engagement (Bowra 1998).

The regional-engagement concept proposes a core group of "engagement professionals" who would form the basis for, and provide command and control of regional-engagement activities.

The structure suggested for a typical regional-engagement force (REF), is formed around a nucleus from the CINC's theater special operations command. The core force assigned to the REF would be Special Operations Force (SOF) (Bowra 1998).

The REF's functions will consist of the following: situational awareness, whereby the REF performs as global scouts to provide early warning of potential crisis; war avoidance here the REF serves as a strategic shaper, consisting of taking action through, by and with indigenous people to prevent a crisis; and finally, the REF as Battlespace managers responsible for creating conditions, through the use of combat outposts, favorable for the U.S. entry of U.S. combat forces (Boyett 1999).

What impact will these relatively new concepts have on the assessment and selection process? What, if any additions, deletions or modifications will they require? Should we reexamine and revalidate the list of attributes in order to select soldiers for success in the field, in lieu of those now deemed necessary to success in the Special Forces Qualification Course, SFQC?

Would there necessarily be an effective change in attributes for success in the field? Or, perhaps the standard bar does not need to be raised or changed in anyway at all.

On the other hand, the development of the REF and regional-engagement operations may very well call for a shift in the type of assessment and selection of Special Forces personnel needed for the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

Part I

SFAS Overview

Special Forces Assessment and Selection "is designed to identify a self-disciplined individual who is physically fit, intelligent, motivated, trainable, and possesses the attributes that will enable him to be a successful Special Forces soldier" (SWCS Regulation 611-1 1997, 1-18).

SFAS training is "physically demanding, sleep deprives one of sleep, induces stress, and examines performance objectives" (Feely 1998, Interview). These four principles, to various degrees, are inherent in all Special Forces missions. "SFAS attempts to capture a soldier's profile by first administering a series of mental, learning and personality tests, and secondly by processing the soldier through a series of field-related assessment activities" (Velky 1990). The following is a list of the mental, learning, personality tests, and the "field related assessment activities" used in SFAS:

Mental/Learning/Personality

1. Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB)
2. 16 Personality Factor Test (16PF)
3. Wonderlic Personnel Intelligence Test (WPIT)
4. Minnesota Multifacet Personality Inventory (MMPI)
5. Assembling Objects Test (AOT)
6. Field Related Assessment Activities
7. Situation Reaction Events (SRs)
8. Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)

9. Short, Medium and Long Distance Runs (Runs)

10. Obstacle Course (O Course)

11. Short, Medium and Long Distance Ruckmarches (Rucks)

12. Military orienteering (MO)

13. Log drills (LD)

SFAS is conducted in a neutral, formal and disciplined environment. "Candidates participate in approximately 25 activities designed to place them under various forms of physical and mental stress where specific performance and behaviors are assessed" (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997). The events are performed with limited information and with no performance feedback. Candidates are never harassed, threatened, or encouraged.

SFAS events are designed so that the candidates will not necessarily achieve the performance levels (standards) set, and therefore ARE NOT PASS OR FAIL EVENTS. The levels of performance are set so candidates can be evaluated based on how well they perform in trying to achieve them (SWCS Regulation 611-1, 10-20).

The task, conditions, and standards for all events, except the Army physical fitness test, are "restricted in nature" and are not discussed in this thesis.

The entire SFAS process is conducted over a 24-day period. The first five days are dedicated to in-processing and individual assessment activities such as aptitude testing, the Army swim and physical fitness test, and a short distance ruckmarch. The next eight days are also individual oriented events, but they are more physically demanding in nature. These events consist of various distance runs, an obstacle course, ruckmarches and military orienteering. The next two days include log drills and "general subjects." The "general subjects" provide the candidates with skills that will be useful in the next series of events. These two days are also less physically demanding then the previous week, and allow the candidates a brief recovery period.

The next six days are predominately team oriented events. These "situation and reaction stakes" assesses a candidates behavior while working as part of a team. The last field related assessment activity is a long distance ruckmarch. The last six days tend to be the most physically demanding part of the assessment process. From day six through day 22, the candidates are allowed a maximum of four hours of sleep a day. The last two days of SFAS consists of out-processing and determining the candidate's suitability (selection board) for Special Forces training.

The History of Special Forces Assessment and Selection

In the early 1980s, the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) had an extremely high attrition rate, resulting in insufficient return on the investment of training dollars. It was financially unacceptable to commit substantial resources for unsuitable candidates.

In the mid-1980s the deputy commander of Special Warfare Center & School (SWCS) recognized the need for a selection process and "began designing a program in which soldiers could be assessed before they attended the SF Qualification Course. In 1987, project officers from SWCS began working with the Army Research Institute to define desirable personality traits and effective methods of assessing human behavior" (Young 1996).

The Army conducted the first SFAS course in June of 1988 at Camp Mackall, North Carolina. The course was created to accomplish two purposes: provide the operational force with the appropriate soldier and prevent the Army from wasting resources on candidates that were not compatible with Special Forces training.

Special Forces Assessment and Selection was based on a fourteen-month study conducted by ARI, and three individuals were designated as the project officers. The research and the development of SFAS was based on studies of other military and

paramilitary special operation units that use or had used an assessment and selection process to select their personnel. The research was primarily based on the British Special Air Service (SAS); the Australian SAS; and, the defunct Office of Strategic Services (OSS) selection courses. The initial step that the project officers took was "to define personality traits consistent with successful completion of Special Forces training and effective duty as a Special Forces soldier" (Young 1996, 23-26). ARI analyzed successful soldier traits, derived the original attributes from a two-year study (1985-1987).

The next step, was to devise methods to test for the attributes a prospective candidate should possess. Methods to test for these desired attributes were based on the project officers' first-hand experience gained from participation in and observation of the SAS selection course (Velky 1990).

"The nature of SFAS is not complex nor difficult to understand. It was founded to identify soldiers who can be trained to perform effectively in unpredictable, adverse and hostile environments, and be dedicated to their profession" (Velky 1990). The initial criteria followed by the project officers was to "find candidates that are reasonably fit, reasonably motivated, and reasonably intelligent" (Feely 1998, Interview). Based on this objective and the research conducted by ARI, the following original attributes were determined to be essential to completing SFQC and effective duty in Special Forces (Velky 1990):

1. Physical fitness
2. Motivation
3. Intelligence
4. Responsibility
5. Stability

6. Trustworthiness

7. Sociability

8. Leadership

Over the years SWCS has worked with ARI to refine its methodology to more accurately determine the attributes essential for accomplishing SF missions. The current attributes and their definitions are explored in this chapter. The current methodology employed by SWCS, which was implemented in 1995, now uses a "'front end analysis of mission requirements' to derive the attributes that are desired in a Special Forces soldier" (Carlin & Sanders 1996). To define desirable attributes, one had to analyze the attributes that were required to accomplish all Special Forces missions, based upon mission analysis. Once the mandatory attributes were identified, the methods of testing for the attributes were then developed. This relatively new methodology, however, did not radically change existing mandatory attributes or testing methods. The purpose of the whole process then is to determine if the candidate possesses the essential attributes identified in the mission analysis. If the candidate meets the screening requirements or standards, he is selected to attend SFQC (Carlin & Sanders 1996).

"The unique nature of SFAS is twofold. In addition to selecting the right soldier for Special Forces, it screens soldiers who lack, either temporarily or permanently, the qualities and potential necessary to complete training" (Velky 1990).

Why is SOF important? In defense planning, decision makers look to SOF to provide a strategic economy of force in support of conventional forces to expand the range of available options, and to provide unique capabilities. SF are a strategic economy of force. SOF reinforce, augment, supplement, and complement conventional

forces before, during, and after a conflict, thereby increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of our military effort.

For instance, SOF can be used early in an operation to prevent conflict and conserve resources. When conflict is imminent, SOF may be employed in a variety of prehostility missions to signal determination, demonstrate support to allies, and begin the complicated processes of positioning forces for combat and preparing the battlefield.

During conflict, SOF may be most effective in conducting economy-of-force operations, generating strategic advantage disproportionate to the resources they represent. SOF can locate, seize, or destroy strategic targets, obtain critical intelligence, test an enemy's defenses, diminish his prestige, disorganize, disrupt, and demoralize his troops, and divert important resources. SOF may also be called on to speed the transition to a postconflict government and economy. When used in concert with conventional forces, these missions maximize the capabilities of both forces, which contributes to a synergy of operational effectiveness.

Additionally, decision makers have repeatedly chosen SOF for a myriad of coalition actions to solve a broad array of operational problems on a united front. SOF's ability to support multinational warfare by providing advisory and liaison capabilities to rapidly integrate allied forces into an operable force component is of prime importance in today's security climate, where allies and friendly nations share the responsibility for worldwide peace and stability.

Recruiting

The issue of recruiting has been very much involved in the process recently. Since the Army initiated its draw down in 1991, it has attempted to enlist even more fresh recruits with greater frequency to sustain the force. Likewise, Special Forces increased its campaign to recruit more soldiers from the conventional Army.

In fact, Major General Tangney, then Commander of the Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, applied two new initiatives in 1996. First, he waived two initial entrance requirements: The 50 meter surface swim test, and lowered the General Technical (GT) test score from 110 to 100 to open up the recruiting population by more than 25 thousand soldiers in that year. Second, he reoriented the recruiters toward a new target market. The new market, was the Army Specialist, or E-4. This was a shift from the old paradigm.

The usefulness in this methodology shift for Special Forces was felt immediately. It became apparent that the GT score was not as relevant to the candidates' aptitude for training as it was once believed or purported to be. The score had been based upon regional norms. Therefore, if a candidate received the test in California, his score would be based on norms from that region of the United States, and not New York, or some other area. This fact alone made the GT test less valid for Special Forces selection. Also, because the GT test is primarily utilized to orient a new recruit toward a specific Military Occupational Skill (MOS), Special Forces or CMF 18 was not one of the categories tested. Special Forces are more concerned with the candidates' intelligence. For this reason, SFAS instituted other tests, such as the Wonderlick test, which is much more effective in determining a candidate's aptitude for Special Forces than the GT.

Two years have past since this change in recruiting policy occurred. Major General Tangney proved correct in opening this aperture, thereby allowing more candidates to apply for Special Forces training. In addition as it turns out, this change made absolutely no difference in the average GT score of those attending SFAS today. In fact, the mean score is no less than 115 (Hazlett 1999).

The 50-meter surface swim test prevented many people from ever applying for Special Forces in the first place, even though they may have had every other attribute

the Force needed in a soldier. When Major General Tangney waived this requirement, he made a commitment to identify those who showed potential to learn how to swim, thus allowing those with this potential to continue through the SFAS program.

If the candidate made it through the rest of selection, he would then be sent to attend a two-week swimming course, prior to attending the Special Forces Qualification course. If at the end of two weeks the candidate could not pass the 50 meter test, he would be released back to the conventional Army.

The result of these two initiatives alone has brought an exponential number of soldiers into the training pipeline, and subsequently, many more Special Forces qualified soldiers to the Force.

The following analysis reviews the current pros and cons of today's Special Forces recruiting system. For several years Special Forces recruiting had been a branch of United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). In the past, recruiting teams charged with inspiring soldiers to apply to Special Forces, were very often not Special Forces qualified. They had no first hand knowledge about the Career Management Field (CMF) and the complaint was that some of these recruiters misrepresented the branch and maintained a "used car salesman" approach to the career field. Needless to say, this did not do a lot for the image of Special Forces.

Consequently, a concerted effort was made to assign Special Forces qualified soldiers to recruiting teams to add credibility to the effort. In fact, the author's predecessor at Company G,1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group Airborne, initiated a program that allowed an assessor to travel with the recruiting team. This enabled soldiers to ask questions about SFAS, or ask what a career in Special Forces was like, and receive honest answers from someone who had been there. The feeling was that this change helped to dislodge many of the myths surrounding Selection and

Special Forces in general, and that it was instrumental in recruiting new candidates effectively.

There is no empirical evidence that supports this conclusion, but there is evidence that this is a correct assumption because every SFAS cycle was filled to maximum capacity during that period of time.

However, the recruiting program just mentioned above was discontinued due to force structure changes, and a lack of commitment for the program at battalion level, despite the program's apparent success.

Also, the recruiting team was responsible for administering the Army Physical Readiness Test (APFT). During my tenure, several of the candidates attended SFAS in poor condition and failed the APFT. One would think that if someone made application to Special Forces, they would be in the best physical condition of their life, but this was not the case at all. During the candidates' out-counseling the cadre discovered that many candidates were not even given the APFT before they came to SFAS. Others only received a cursory test. Very often, this was the case with the swim test as well. Shortcomings such as these were very costly, and defeated the purpose of bringing the so called, "best suited" to the Selection Course .

Screen-out or Screen-in

In the recent past, there has been some question as to whether or not recruiters would administer the full SFAS selection battery. In doing so, they should have to work in close conjunction with the USASOC Psychological Application Directorate, but this would amount to a new selection methodology shifting the program from a "screen-out," to a "screen-in" approach. A screen-in approach would limit some potential candidates from attending SFAS. The benefit would likely be, however, that the best-suited candidates would attend.

Cadre/Assessor Roles and Procedures:

The purpose of the assessors is to ensure a fair and impartial assessment of each volunteer's performance. This assessment is based on the assessor's observation and evaluation of each candidate. "The primary role of the SFAS cadre is to assess each candidate's potential for acceptable levels of performance" (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997, 10-20). All documented assessments are based on the candidate's actual performance. Assessors only rate an attribute if it has been observed on a standardized assessment form. These assessments are forwarded to the selection board and used to determine a candidate's suitability to attend SFQC and subsequent duty with Special Forces.

Assessing

In 1995 the Special Warfare Center recognized a problem with the cadre that was responsible for assessing candidates into Special Forces: the problem was a lack of standardization in terms of writing a cogent observation report about a candidate. Because of this problem, the selection boards had a difficult time deciphering the observation reports and consequently a more difficult time discerning a candidate's attributes and potential for SF. To cure this, ARI worked together with the Special Warfare Center (SWC) to develop a validation program which was interactive and utilized different media to improve assessor observation reports. An assessor would have to pass each phase of the validation program in order to assess candidates. Furthermore, in 1996, during the author's tenure, we increased the fidelity of the assessor validation program to include collective events similar to those candidates would experience. A new assessor would act as the team leader and other cadre would assist as role players. The experience gained from this exercise was very beneficial for

the new cadre member, and subsequently the boards recognized significant improvements in the quality of assessments.

The experience level of most assessors was also significant. Most of the cadre had been involved in every conflict from Grenada to "Uphold Democracy", in Haiti. When this author took command of the company, there were forty-two men on the rolls. Six months later the number was reduced to only twenty-eight. In addition, there was a very significant increase in OPTEMPO. Essentially, we were left with only one team to assess 350 candidates per cycle. Also that year, the Special Warfare Center ran eight SFAS cycles. Under these circumstances, the cadre were totally and continually exhausted, and there is no empirical evidence to show how their assessment of candidates was affected by this situation. In fact, there is no empirical evidence that shows the true validity of the assessment format.

The assessment format lists several attributes both individual and collective on an observation report. The assessor assigns a numerical value between 1-3 to the attribute observed during phases I and II of SFAS. At the bottom of the form, there is a section for remarks (figure 2). It is the author's opinion that this was the most valuable aspect of the entire observation report. In this section, the assessor is able to express exactly what he is observing the candidate do. The assessor will relate both positive and negative actions of the candidate and correlate his observation to the critical attributes listed in the category above, then assign a numerical value to weight the candidate's performance. During the author's tenure of command this aspect of the evaluation and assessment was the best indicator of how successful a candidate would perform in the qualification course; and more importantly, in a Special Forces Group.

A specimen of the observation report used is illustrated below in figure 1. The demographic data is listed on the top of the form, and then the individual attributes along

the left side; the collective attributes in the middle; and a scale of rating values is shown along the right side of the form with the comment area in the middle below. The numerical rating provides limited value, if any, because it is far too general and subjective to be useful (Hazlett 1999, Interview).

Special Forces Assessment & Selection Form

Candidate:	Roster #:	Class:
Activity:	Date:	Cadre:
Rank:	Age:	

Attribute Rating	Leadership Traits Rating	Rating
Measure		
Motivation	Communications	
Responsibility	Influence	3= Outstanding
Stability	Judgement	2= Satisfactory
Teamwork	Decisiveness	1= Unsatisfactory
Intelligence	Accountability	
Physical Fitness		
Trustworthiness		
Maturity		

Comments/Rating Justification

Figure 1. Special Forces Assessment and Selection Form

The rating measure described above leaves a great deal of latitude and discretion to the assessor (Hazlett 1999). However, because the terms are very general in nature, as long as the candidate performs marginally well, he will receive a satisfactory mark. The number is then placed next to the attribute observed. There has never been research conducted to determine how assessor fatigue affects these ratings, but the assessor comments generally highlighted for the selection board, those attributes that the candidate is in fact overtly display.

Candidate Withdrawal

There are three ways a candidate may not complete the SFAS program: voluntary, involuntary, or medical withdrawal. A voluntary withdrawal takes place when a candidate chooses not to continue in the SFAS program. The candidate I states why he is withdrawing, and signs the standardized withdrawal form. An "involuntary withdrawal" is the removal of a candidate from the SFAS Program by authorized personnel, for reasons determined through the assessment and selection process" (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997).

A candidate may be involuntarily withdrawn from SFAS for the following reasons: failing to obey instructions or refusing to participate in any event; failing to demonstrate the necessary attributes or potential to continue in the SFAS Program; violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and, integrity violations. A candidate also may be involuntarily withdrawn if he jeopardizes fellow candidates in the completion of their Situation Reaction event, or cannot maintain pace with his team. Additionally, if a candidate falls back 15 or more meters from his team he will be involuntarily withdrawn. However, the candidate will be warned three times to keep pace with his team, before he is involuntarily withdrawn. A candidate may be medically withdrawn from the Program if his condition is certified by a medical doctor or Physician's Assistant. "A candidate will not be medically withdrawn within 24 hours of completion of the last event. The candidate who is deemed to be medically unfit to train will be placed on medical rest and his assessment file will go before the selection board for consideration" (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997, 20-25).

If we were to change the slate of attributes now used what would they be? Some proponents of *Force XXI* believe that the attributes need to change or that some must be added. Some say that there should be a greater emphasis on cognitive skills, and a

method devised to determine the candidate's perceptive and interpersonal aptitude attributes (Feely 1998). The author's question is when is enough, enough?

Selection Board

The purpose of the selection board is to examine the potential Special Forces soldier's assessment packet and select or non-select a candidate to attend SFQC. The board is comprised of at least seven persons, but not more than nine Special Forces qualified officers and senior non-commission officers. The president of the board is a Colonel. Usually, it is the Commander of the 1st Special Warfare Training Group. The board president may override any vote and makes the final decision over whether a candidate will be selected. At least three selectors are field grade officers; three in the grade of E9; one from a minority group; and one from the Army Reserves. In addition, one chief warrant officer (CW3, 4, or 5) may be a board member. All board members have equal votes. The board will only review the assessment packets of candidates that failed to meet the minimum standards. The members of the selection board may "request interviews with either candidates or cadre (assessors) for purpose of clarifying a candidate's performance or an assessor's method of evaluation" (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997). The results of the board are then forwarded to the Commanding General of SWCS for validation (SWCS Reg 611-1 1997, 1-74).

During the author's tenure as commander, the boards were fairly consistent in terms of rank, however, some of the board members hadn't seen an operational detachment in many years. Their view of whom they were selecting consisted of images from the Vietnam era. The researchers from ARI called this the "Halo Complex." Essentially, the board's impression of the individuals they selected were defined in two ways: one was that they felt that they were selecting individuals in their own image of

excellence; or, the other way, was that the candidates would never measure up. Both of these phenomenon were difficult for the program to overcome.

Another problem with the selection board is that the two principal individuals with the greatest interest in the outcome of the board are the dominant members. First Battalion Commander and the Training Group have a significant, if not decisive impact on the outcome of the selection boards and their vote. In fact SWCS Reg. 611-1 1996 1-74), gives authority to the training group commander to over-rule any decision made by the board majority. In 1996, the group commander's authority was exercised in this way on several occasions.

Attribute Development

The thirteen attributes currently used in SFAS were derived in August 1992 by a panel of ARI researchers and Special Forces "officers and NCOs in charge of SFAS" (Zananis 1998). As noted previously, the findings of the "front end analysis of mission requirements" (implemented in 1995) confirmed the panel's findings regarding the attributes. The importance of these attributes and how they pertain to the soldier are justified by the nature of the Special Forces mission. There is a certain amount of "acceptable risk associated with Special Forces missions that require a better caliber officer" (Rothstein 1998). As mentioned previously, most Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) missions are conducted unilaterally with little or no immediate support from U.S. forces. These potentially "high stakes operations require assurances of success, therefore a more exacting selection program" (Rothstein, 1998) that tests and assesses the targeted attributes is necessary. Soldiers and officers that possess these attributes to a higher degree, enhance mission success.

Psychological Screening

General. The ideal in occupational selection in the corporate environment is to find a "best fit" between an individual's attributes and the requirements of a particular job. The result of successful matching is improved employees' performance, improved organizational performance, and increased satisfaction of the employee with work. It is believed that the increased satisfaction leads to low rates of attrition and to high retention of highly skilled and experienced workers, leading in turn to increased performance at less cost.

Unfortunately, this is not the kind of selection process that goes on at SFAS. The SFAS process should be considered as "deselection" or elimination process. With regard to the psychological component, SFAS looks for the extreme outliers; i.e., those for which there is a reasonable basis for believing there is a low probability of functioning reliably and effectively in a Special Forces role. However, this approach is utilized because: (1) it is easier methodologically; and, (2) given the high volume of candidates coming to SFAS, it is impractical to do the kind of more in-depth assessment which "rule-in" versus a "rule-out" strategy requires; and, most importantly (3), we do not really know precisely what are the best attributes for accurate selection to SF. This is not to say there is not high reliability about what attributes are important for a successful special operations soldier. Instead, it only points to the fact that as yet there is no data linking selected attributes to actual field performance, or any particular attributes that we can demonstrate in a scientifically valid manner that will insure success.

As a result of the above issues during the psychological screening process, is looking for those attributes, behavioral patterns, other risk factors, that are generally associated with performance problems. These are usually indicators of

emotional and behavioral instability and/or problems in intellectual functioning and problem solving that will significantly limit the likelihood that a candidate would ever pass SFQC (such as low IQ).

There is no specific algorithm used by the board for evaluating fitness for SF. It changes with the board president and members who tend to judge the importance of various bits of information based on their own personal biases. The rating system used by SFAS is relatively consistent for grading a soldier as having demonstrated satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance on an event. And it is also consistent also for identifying subjects who are considered to be at high risk for future failure in SF, either through academic failure in the qualification course or through predicted behavioral and emotional instability in the future.

The candidate's unit of origin has no real place in any decision scheme regularly employed by the board. High recruiting needs have forced the recruiters to solicit volunteers from non combat arms units and unrelated MOS's at an increasingly higher rate. Recent data covering five classes of candidates in 1998 and the first class for training year 1999 indicate a 59/41 percentage split for combat arms versus non-combat arms. Although it is true that coming from a combat arms MOS increases the likelihood that a soldier will pass SFAS, it is not used as a means for selection or drop. One possible exception is made for those who have Ranger training. The board will often see this as a good test of the subject's functional abilities. Candidates who perform marginally in SFAS and complete the course, are recommended for board consideration by the training cadre or the psychologists, will probably be given an opportunity if they have completed Ranger training. Again, there is no rule on this, it just represents a board tendency.

Demographic Data

Basic demographic data like marital status, number of dependents, country of origin, etc., plays no part in selection. The single exception might be age. It has been documented that a candidate who is active duty, past thirty-five and a second time non-select by the board, tends to be given a "Never to Return rating." Per contra, younger soldiers are given opportunity to try again. However, this involves very few individuals and again, there is no policy regarding these kinds of data points.

Army values are not directly translatable into an assessment scheme in any direct way. Some aspects of the course indirectly reflect on some of these values (e.g., respect, selfless-service), but to say that any of the other designated values are assessed in any way is not possible.

Leadership traits are assessed only in terms of the peer ratings generated during the team week exercises. Frankly, the peer ratings represent one of the best, if not the best data points, for predicting future success and general fitness to join SF. There is evidence that a soldier who ranks at the bottom of his team for leadership, persistence and teamwork and social skills (the three general dimensions of the peer ratings) tends to also be a poor performer overall, and is invariably recommended to the board by the cadre or by the psychologists. These recommendations for the board are based on data other than the peer ratings but there is significant evidence that there is a substantial convergence of psychological test data, cadre observations and ratings, and the peer rating results. However, there is no hard and fast rule on this issue. It is possible for individuals who are very poorly peered to be accepted by the board.

Generally, the higher the candidates military rank, the greater weighting a negative peer evaluation will have. Very poor peer ratings are clearly unacceptable for an officer or more senior Non Commissioned Officer (E-6 or above). On the other hand,

poor peer ratings tend to be less meaningful for individuals at the lowest rank (e.g., the E-3 from a NG unit). The board looks closely at the type and number of least-suited/best-suited ratings that accompany a set of poor peer ratings as a means of confirming or attenuating the poor peer ratings.

Intelligence

This factor does play a key role in a candidate's success in the course, the psychological evaluation of the candidate in terms of future potential as an SFQC candidate and operator, but generally does not effect direct board decisions except in cases of clear and severe problems (e.g., illiteracy). Only recently, the board began taking into consideration this factor (Hazlett, 1998).

Currently, there are several indices of intellectual functioning, including the TABE; the Wonderlic Personnel Test; General Technical (GT) and Functional Abilities scores from the AFQT; and in the recent past, assembling objects (Hazlett, 1998).

The TABE is basically an academic achievement test that concentrates primarily on basic math skills, vocabulary, and verbal reasoning and problem solving. Scores are reported in a T-score format and a grade equivalent format. For simplicity of understanding, the grade equivalency score is used by the board. Basically, the grade equivalency scores top out at 12.9 (meaning last month of senior year in high school). According to Dr. Hazlett, program director for assessment, Psychological Applications Direcorate, United States Special Operation Command (USASOC), Fort Bragg, a 12.9 score on the TABE actually translates to about an eighth grade level of proficiency in terms of the standardized achievement tests used in the private sector. Therefore, any scores below a grade equivalent of 12.9 are, (in Dr Hazlett's opinion), indicative of some significant weaknesses in the subject's academic abilities. However, the subject's

scores on the TABE are almost never used as a disqualifier; the rare exception being an individual who scores below the 7.1 level in all categories. This kind of disqualification occurs only a few times each year (out of 1,500 to 1,650 total candidates). There is no set score that relates to a selection decision. "Obviously, we would want everyone to have at least the max score (12.9) on this measure." However, Dr. Hazlett said, "it has been my experience that lesser scores do not impact on board decisions, despite the fact that these weaknesses are brought to the attention of the final board."

General Technical Score

The GT measure is a useful measure and in the past has been a good reflection of the subject's likely intellectual functioning. The practice of allowing candidates to take this test over and over again, plus the remedial programs offered to candidates who have first test scores of below 100, has significantly changed the utility of this measure. Specifically, most subjects get about a ten-point boost when they retake the test simply due to practice effects. The remedial programs for initial low scorers tend to boost retest scores by between ten to fifteen points. The initial test score is probably a reasonable means of estimating intellectual functioning; however, second and third test scores become less reliable indicators. Generally, although GT scores are highly correlated to IQ, they are not identical. Past data do demonstrate the utility of this test, as the previous 110 minimal score serves to cause a restricted range effect that spoils most statistical analysis. More recent data may be able to show statistically a stronger relationship now that the range of acceptable scores has been dropped down to one-hundred). The average SFAS graduate scores about 115 on the GT while the average SFAS failure scores about two points lower.

The FA measure derived from the AFQT may be somewhat superior to the GT. This is mostly due to the fact that it is highly correlated with the GT; and, due to the fact

that this score is only available from the first testing on the AFQT, and is not obtained for GT retests. Thus, it represents a truer measure of intellectual potential unaffected by test-retest effects.

Wonderlic Test

The Wonderlic Test continues to be the screening test of choice concerning an individual's intellectual ability. Unlike the GT measure, it is not contaminated by previous experience. It is essentially a measure of problem solving that relies upon some verbal reasoning capacities, but is weighted most heavily toward mathematical ability. SF norms have been established for this test that were originally based on norms developed by LTC Morgan Banks at the turn of the decade.

Dr. Hazlett recently ran a large sample, statistically looking at Wonderlic norms and found the sample came out almost identical to the ones developed by Dr. Banks seven or eight years ago. Basically, the average SF candidate scores a couple of points higher than the average person in the 1983 normative study (n=126,324). Average in the civilian population is a score of about 22 (about 50.9 percent of the sample population falling below that score). Average in the SF candidate population is between 24 and 25, placing the average SF candidate between the sixty-first and sixty-sixth percentile nationally.

The relationship of the Wonderlic scores to passing SFAS has always been somewhat weak statistically. This is due to the fact that SFAS places maximum emphasis on physical abilities and endurance and motivational factors, with little challenge on strictly cognitive abilities. However, past research has indicated that individuals scoring in the low end of the distribution on the Wonderlic Test tend to have limited capacity to successfully complete Q-course training.

The Wonderlic Test historically discriminates against individuals who are foreign born, and particularly against individuals to whom English is a second language. Candidates that fit into this category (whose scores fall below the 11th percentile SF norms; 27th percentile national norms) are typically pulled for additional screening. These individuals are given a second test of intellectual functioning, (the Shipley-Hartford Institute of Living Scale), which allows for a somewhat better IQ estimate based on recognition vocabulary and a test of verbal abstract reasoning. Generally, about 85 percent of those who are suspected of low intelligence based on the Wonderlic, test out in the normal range of intelligence (Wechsler Full Scale IQ of 95 or better). The remainder are those who almost without fail show up as having significant problems in literacy, a learning disability, or intellectual deficit, all of which result in a recommendation to the board that the subject not be passed on to attend the SFQC. Again, how the board deals with recommendations is at its discretion. There have been recorded incidents wherein subjects scoring at the very bottom end of the distribution (i.e., 1st percentile) were passed on to the SFQC. The question in the end, of "how low do you go" is not governed by any rules but is ultimately based on the judgment of the board president.

Assembling Objects

The assembling objects test (which was listed as a "spatial" score in SFAS data sets) was initially utilized in an attempt to find something that predicted navigational performance in the Q-course (as this had been an important success criterion for SFAS in the past). Initial research findings indicated that the score on this test was predictive of failure in the Q-course navigational tests in Phase I and ergo, failure in the Q-course. However, in recent years, several additional days of training and practice were added to SFAS resulting in few students failing to Land NavigationCourse.

The current thinking is that navigational ability is a trainable skill and not reflective of some innate characteristic and aptitude. As a result, poor performers on the navigational problems in SFAS are routinely passed on to the Q-course if they show any kind of learning ability over the course of SFAS. Also, in looking at the assembling objects test, in fact it is really another measure of general intelligence versus a specialized visual-spatial reasoning and ability measure. Since other tests are better intelligence estimators, the test seems to make no substantive contribution to discriminating success versus failure of candidates, or in predicting other aspects of performance in SFAS. The board ceased to consider this data point as meaningful in their evaluations of candidates, hence it has been dropped from the selection course.

Language

In the past, the DLAB, the language aptitude battery used by the military, has been a regular part of candidacy evaluation. In the last year or so, graduation from the Q-course was made independent of performance in the Language School. The change meant that an 0+/0+ rating was sufficient. In the past year, SWC stopped administering since giving the DLAB there was no language proficiency requirement for graduation.

At the Special Warfare Center and School (SWC), there are many popular stories about individuals who demonstrated little or no language aptitude on the DLAB, yet had mastery of multiple languages. These apparent inconsistencies in test results and/or prediction and real-world findings have led to considerable distrust of testing methodologies, and to some extent this attitude is justified. There has actually been little real-world utility validation for many of the testing instruments. The long term result of waiving language requirements at the point of qualification will not be evident for several years.

Personality Inventories

In the past, the psychological directorate at USASOC has employed a variety of personality assessment techniques. The following represents several of those tests as of approximately three years ago:

The MMPI/MMPI-2; the 16 Personality Factor (16PF) test; a standardized sentence completion test; an "integrity" test developed by the Army Research Institute commonly referred to as the "biodata" test; a second, shorter ARI "biodata" test, involving what psychologists call a "forced choice format"; a high-risk behaviors checklist; and for selected individuals, a clinical interview.

This process involves a first step of screening all candidates by the use of a battery of tests; a second step of rating subjects into high, moderate, and low risk groups based on tests scores/profiles; and finally, an individual interview of high risk subjects to clarify test results. After the interview, the interviewed candidates are re-rated as high, moderate, and low risk based on the additional data obtained.

The MMPI/MMPI-2 is the most researched personality test in the world. This is not a "pure" personality test in that it does not solely reflect personality (relatively stable traits that are predictive of an individual's behavior most of the time, in most situations.) Roughly half the data obtained from this test does look at more chronic trait patterns, but the remainder of the test reflects "state" factors reflecting how the subject is functioning at the time of testing. This test is primarily used in clinical settings to detect and elucidate pathological illness in individuals. There are well-established norms for clinical populations. In occupational settings, such as SFAS, the test has quite different norms. These norms can differ considerably between occupational groups. The USASOC, Directorate of Psychology, utilizes experience developed over the last ten years, and has unique norms for the SFAS candidate population. These norms allow us

to identify those individuals who develop profiles that are uncommon, and atypical for this group. An algorithm that identifies individuals as high risk are those who demonstrate abnormal (roughly +2 standard deviations from the norm) scores on any of nine primary clinical scales, one of the validity scales, and one of the supplemental scales sensitive to potential for substance abuse problems.

A high risk group also includes those individuals who demonstrate Wonderlic scores below the 11th percentile (SF norms) and a Shipley based IQ estimate of less than 95 (mean of 100, standard deviation=15). Finally, those that are labeled as high risk, and those individuals who come up with positive scores of greater than one on the "delinquency" scale of the ARI biodata test are not recommended.

The 16 PF is a very widely used and researched test that was added to the battery originally because it is less oriented toward illness/pathological traits and considered to be more oriented toward developing a profile of normal personality characteristics. There is significant evidence that there is great utility in the use of this test for the purpose of the selection process. However, its use has been suspended until such time as its predictive validity can be analyzed.

The ARI "biodata" test is a second generation development of an "integrity" test, first requested by COL Gary Greenfield some years ago. Basically, the desire was to develop a test that would tell us about a subject's reliability when functioning outside of direct observation. The test was originated because all of the other tests are to some degree subject to image manipulation. In other words, subjects can readily identify the intent of many if not most items on the MMPI, 16PF, and other commonly used personality tests and thereby, can and do tend to present themselves as more virtuous and lacking in common human flaws than is really the case. In the end, the biodata test focused on predicting those individuals who were most prone to demonstrate behavioral

problems in the future, particularly when placed under stress. A similar test was developed for the Ranger Regiment assessment program and this version is a descendant (shorter) from the original used at Fort Benning.

To this date, roughly 1,000 subjects have been tested utilizing the biodata test. The validity of this test has been compared to outcome of other psychological measures, and seems reliable. The vast majority of subjects identified as likely to be problematic by this test are already identified by algorithm using the MMPI-2. However, the value of the test is that it does identify a small subgroup of individuals who managed to depict themselves as low or moderate risk with the MMPI-2. Thus, this test is serves to provide some incremental improvement in ability to eliminate those who are prone to get into trouble in the future. Findings to this point indicate that almost none who test high on the Delinquency scale of this test are tagged for the final board review by either the cadre or by other psychological test results. However, the overall utility of this instrument is still being examined.

In the last year, SFAS has started using what is called a "forced choice, twenty-six item" biodata test. This is a much shortened version of the biodata test, and it is formatted in a manner that makes it very difficult for a subject to manipulate his image on the test. This version was developed when it was discovered that the eighty item biodata test (above) was still to some degree prone to impression management.

It appears that this form of the test is much less prone to impression management. However, to this date the data (preliminary) has not clearly demonstrated that this test works as well or better than the longer, earlier version. Early claims by ARI were that the social maturity scale of this short test was a very strong predictor of all

types of negative outcome in SFAS (i.e., drops of all kinds, taken together or individually).

The Directorate of Psychology (USASOC) had been using a structured sentence completion blank as part of its assessment battery in the past. This task requires subjects to complete sentences from stems already printed on the page.

For example, " I regret _____." Unfortunately, there is no scoring system used in evaluating this data. It was never used as part of the algorithm for identifying those in need of an interview. Furthermore, there was no study of what constituted a normative approach to the test. Finally, although potentially useful for a skilled interviewer, in most cases, it is believed that interpretations of the data had more to do with the psychologist who read the results, than the individual who wrote the response. For all of these reasons, the use of this instrument was discontinued, as its use is currently indefensible by any standards of the profession of psychology.

Presently, SFAS employs the use of a high-risk "behaviors checklist" which consists of some fifty-three items that subjects are asked to endorse as true of false. Items query the candidate regarding a past history of things like arrests, substance abuse, divorce, infidelity, school problems, gang affiliation, etc., all oriented toward identifying individuals who have particular histories of behavior that would place them at high risk for future impulsive, irresponsible, or criminal acts. This data has been used in the past as a means of obtaining corroborating information for tendencies suggested by the other psychological test results. It allows some fleshing out of the candidate's past behavioral background during the interview with the psychologist. Candidates are generally highly compliant in reporting truthfully, although about 15 percent chose to deny even common errors and experiences.

At a minimum, this test will continue to be used as an element of testing, adjunct to the interview. It has proven to be useful to the interviewer in extracting important information that the board gives credence to in their evaluations of candidates for selection to the (SFQC).

Summing up, it seems quite reasonable to conclude, that if the right candidates are not being selected, it is certainly not due to lack of study, deliberation and effort. There are a multitude of tests, and methods of testing. To a significant degree, these tests provide checks and balances of each other, and should insure that the right candidates are selected to attend SFQC.

Part II

The second half of this analysis examines the responses of twenty-one Special Forces officers and non-commissioned officers. Each of whom have more than fifteen years of active federal service working in Special Forces either within a staff, headquarters, or operational unit. It was essential to gather the primary information through interviews on specific questions pertaining to SFAS and *ARSOF Force XXI.*

The following questions (Appendix A) were identified to guide the interview process and to glean as much information as possible from the experience of the individuals interviewed:

1. Do you feel that recently qualified Special Forces officers and soldiers assigned to your unit demonstrate the requisite skills and aptitude to succeed in any mission assigned?

2. Do you think that the onset of *ARSOF Force XXI* will require a change in the type of soldier or officer assigned to your unit? In other words, should a separate attribute be developed for new Special Forces soldiers?

3. If you believe that new attribute sets should be developed for Special Forces what should they be?

4. How familiar are you with the current SFAS program and have you ever visited the course at Camp Makall while a cycle was in session?

5. Are the operational detachments full?

6. What about the maturity level of the soldiers you are are getting today compared to five or even ten years ago?

The responses given to the questions above were very enlightening. Eighteen individuals believed that they were getting the best possible qualified soldiers from the Special Forces training pipeline. They indicated that their soldiers and officers were very motivated and by all available measures observed that they were successful in terms of mission accomplishment.

Only 50 percent of those interviewed were familiar with the current terms used to describe the attributes soldiers are assessed for today. The other fifty percent thought that they were the Army's core values. After expanding upon this question I identified all of the attributes assessed. Although each interviewee understood the current list, they could not imagine why the Army's core values were not used. Fourteen of those interviewed thought that the Army's values of *integrity, loyalty and selfless-service* should somehow be integrated into the assessment scheme. The general consensus was that all other positive attributes are derived from these three key Army values. Those interviewed thought that the Army Special Forces Assessment and Selection program attribute list should be more closely related to the Army's value system.

All twenty-one believed that their soldiers and officers were tested, validated, and assessed so much now, that when combined with real world deployments, it would have an adverse effect upon morale if they were tested further. Regardless of mission

changes or future organizational changes, all believed that their soldiers were capable enough, adaptive enough and flexible enough to provide the best chance of success either as war-fighters, or as global scouts in any operational environment.

It should be noted that none of the interviewees ever attended the SFAS course at Fort Bragg as an observer, or in any other capacity. Two of those interviewed had attended similar programs for selection into other Special Mission Units (SMUs). After they were familiarized with the current SFAS program, they believed that the Special Forces Selection program was much more rigorous than the one they attended.

In general, those interviewed believed that their soldiers were mature and that they were dedicated to doing their very best under every circumstance. However, most believed that they observed a distinct improvement in maturity and dedication in the E-4s from they arrived from the training pipeline and a year later when promoted. However, they indicated that this has ended and they could not be happier with the quality of the men they are receiving.

All interviewees' want to fill their detachments with qualified and capable men from the qualification course. The problem they said, was that they could not get enough men in fast enough, to fill the organization. They reiterated that because it takes so long to qualify a soldier or officer, usually between 6 months and two years, the OPTEMPO and rate of personnel turn over always makes their numbers short. They normally have to send composite teams on missions to fulfill their requirement. This is one of the reasons why these interviewees feel that their personnel do have the required attributes to operate effectively in *Force XXI*.

Special Forces have operated under ambiguous and austere conditions in the past. In fact, when conditions are irregular and require a specialized response, Special

Forces is the force of choice. How then would the Special Forces attributes need to change from what they are currently to meet the needs of *ARSOF Force XXI*?

The Special Forces Conference at Fort Bragg, in April 1999, was in fact focused on the topic of Regional Engagement and Special Forces roles and missions under this new concept. They defined an operator not different from today, yet they spoke of terms and principles of engagement as being unique to today's doctrine.

Regional Engagement

Regional engagement is a military operational concept for implementing the strategy of preventive defense as an integral element of the interagency activity of peacetime engagement (figure2). The definition of regional engagement proposed in this paper is:

> Regionally oriented military information-gathering activities and proactive measures taken to influence international conditions to protect or advance United States national interests abroad.

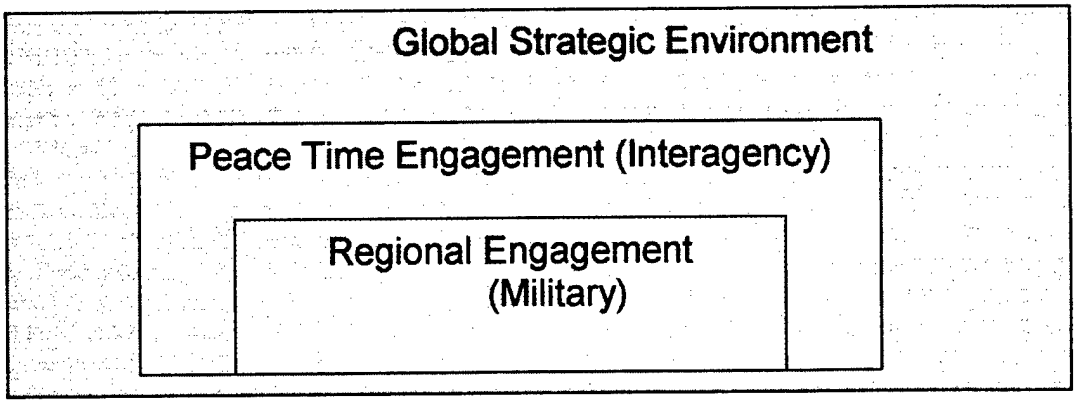

Figure 2. Context of Regional Engagement. Source: Research Planning, Inc., 1998)

Significant aspects of this definition include the regional focus and proactive nature of the concept. The regional focus reflects the unique manner in which the military

organizes, conducts operations, and apportions forces. The regional nature of the military's structure and approach does not parallel the structures and approaches of the other agencies involved in peacetime engagement. This dichotomy presents interesting challenges for military planners and operators in coordinating regional activities. The military approach, however, does present a logical methodology for establishing a coherent response to requirements progressing from individual countries, to regions, to a global program of engagement. This approach recognizes that each region (and in some cases sub-region) presents unique challenges and distinct requirements (RPI 1998, 10-20).

Regional engagement is usually performed as an integral part of an overall interagency effort with the DOD, normally in a supporting role. Commonly, the Department of State (DOS) will be the lead agency. Occasionally OGAs will have the lead, and in rare circumstances, DOD will have the lead.

The concept of regional engagement represents a radical shift in how the military approaches nonwar fighting tasks. First, in combination with war fighting and homeland defense, regional engagement forms a holistic approach to military operations. This holistic approach recognizes the continuity and interdependence of activities performed across the continuum of operations. It applies the same proactive approach: integrated planning and command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) that the military has traditionally dedicated to war fighting. Second, regional engagement provides a proactive context for the conduct of preventive defense. Third, it recognizes that these operations are not a lesser-included subset of war fighting. Fourth, regional engagement copes with the reality that these types of operations cannot afford to be forsaken in case of contingencies, or even a major theater war (MTW). While this paper will examine these four ideas in greater depth, the following paragraphs address each

briefly. Taken together, these four aspects of regional engagement represent a significant enhancement in the ability of the United States to meet future challenges and threats, both symmetric and asymmetric (RPI, 1998)

First, regional engagement is an integral part of a comprehensive approach to operational art. This approach establishes that the activities performed by the military when not fighting wars are not merely a means to employ an otherwise idle asset; but are, in and of themselves, valid uses of the military element of national power. Taken as a whole with war fighting and homeland defense, this concept reflects a recognition that the military is continuously on an operational footing (RPI, 1998).

It focuses attention on the fact that regional engagement may provide identification, understanding, and warning of impending threats to national security and of opportunities to advance national interests in the absence of a clear threat. Regional engagement can provide a means of containing an emerging crisis and exploiting opportunities; or, failing to contain an emerging crisis, shape the battle space to facilitate war fighting. The warnings and the activities undertaken to contain the crisis integrate with homeland defense. They may provide warning and indications of externally generated threats or even eliminate the sources of, and/or reasons for, those threats.

Second, regional engagement is a proactive approach to preventive defense and maintaining strategic initiative. This concept, with the deterrent effect of a credible and dominant war fighting capability, accepts responsibility for global situation management to avoid war. Avoiding war because the impetus for the impending conflict has been eliminated or reduced on terms favorable to the United States, is inarguably the best course of action. The military has demonstrated repeatedly throughout history its ability to influence these conditions (RPI, 1998).

Third, regional engagement is a distinct requirement, not a lesser-included case. While not meant to imply that force structures cannot be sufficiently versatile to employ in multiple roles (war fighting, regional engagement, or homeland defense), there are aspects of regional engagement that require dedicated assets and specific doctrine, training, leader development, organization, and matériel. Professional war fighters with a clear battle focus may provide a pool of very talented and capable resources for regional engagement, but they cannot fully prepare for the unique requirements of regional engagement activities. Further, shifting the focus from war fighting does negatively impact combat readiness (RPI, 1998).

Fourth, regional engagement, war fighting, and homeland defense may take place concurrently. The Army After Next (AAN) war games and recent operational experiences highlighted the reality that it will be neither politically acceptable nor operationally wise to halt regional engagement activities worldwide to reallocate those assets to a regional contingency operation or an Major Theater of War (MTW). The regional engagement requirement is significant enough to warrant employing military forces in its own right. When the crisis necessitating a contingency operation arose, the regional engagement requirement remained (RPI, 1998).

Moreover, failing to remain engaged may give rise to a second escalating crisis. Significantly, the increasingly multinational character of modern war (combined with increased pressures to limit collateral damage, to maintain limited but achievable goals for U.S. combat troop involvement, and to extract U.S. combat elements as early as possible) indicates that regional engagement is likely to continue simultaneously with war fighting activities.

Asymmetric vulnerabilities are likewise dynamic in nature, time, and space. They are just as much a function of the global operational environment as the threat. Hence, the variables in the conduct of regional engagement activities directly impact on the variables of the conduct of homeland defense and war fighting.

Soldiers

Soldiers involved in regional engagement as core regional engagement professionals should exhibit certain traits. The primary change in these soldiers is a shift from a battle focus to an engagement focus.

The following are traits that, among others, core regional engagement professionals should exhibit (RPI, 1998):

1. Above average intelligence.
2. Language aptitude.
3. Acceptance of other cultures.
4. Tolerance of ambiguity.
5. Problem-solving skills.
6. Tolerance for austere living conditions.
7. Ability to function both in groups and in isolation.
8. Emotional and mental stability.
9. Tolerance for stress.
10. Self-discipline.
11. Self-confidence.
12. Flexibility.

The close alignment of the characteristics and capabilities of SOF with those required for regional engagement is the basis for selecting the theater SOC and SOF from each of the Services as the nucleus for the REF, and the core regional engagement structures, respectively. In ARSOF War Game 2, participants from the various Services,

branches, and OGAs repeatedly used the term "SOF-like" to describe the desirable characteristics of forces engaged in such operations. Similarly, they also described the desired professional development of leaders of such forces as "SOF-like." The *SO Posture Statement* lists the following characteristics of SOF:

- Mature professionals with leadership abilities.
- Specialized skills, equipment, and tactics.
- Regional focus.
- Language skills.
- Political and cultural sensitivity.
- Small, flexible, joint-force structure.

SOF can—

- Be tasked to organize quickly and deploy rapidly to provide tailored responses to many different situations.
- Gain access to hostile or denied areas.
- Provide limited security and medical support for themselves and those they support.
- Communicate worldwide with unit equipment.
- Live in austere, harsh environments without extensive support.
- Survey and assess local situations and report these assessments rapidly.
- Work closely with regional military and civilian authorities and populations.
- Organize indigenous people into working teams to solve local problems.
- Deploy at low cost, with a low profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces.

Further, the *SOF Posture Statement* lists the following principal missions and collateral activities. Note the obvious correlation in many cases to regional engagement activities.

SOF principal missions are—

- Counter-proliferation (CP).
- Combating terrorism (CBT).
- Foreign internal defense (FID).

- Special reconnaissance (SR).
- Direct action (DA).
- Psychological operations (PSYOP).
- Civil affairs (CA).
- Unconventional warfare (UW).
- Information operations (IO).

SOF collateral activities are—

- Coalition support.
- Combat search and rescue (CSAR).
- Counter-drug activities (CD).
- Humanitarian de-mining (HD) activities.
- Humanitarian assistance (HA).
- Peace operations.
- Security assistance.
- Special activities.

In his *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, 1998, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen points to how these missions and collateral activities reflect "a dual heritage" of SOF comprised of their roles as "key penetration and strike forces...." and "warrior-diplomats capable of influencing, advising, training, and conducting operations with foreign forces, officials, and populations." The Secretary goes on to cite the "complementary" nature of these missions, pointing out that "One of these two generic SOF roles is at the heart of each of the special operations core missions". These statements support the Report's conclusion that SOF "are the forces of choice in situations requiring regional orientation and cultural and political sensitivity."

In the view of the author, the detail describing Regional Engagement and the Regional Engagement Force (REF) reflects what Special Forces has been for years: soldier-ambassadors for the United States, with tremendous capabilities. Does Army Special Forces need to change anything in their selection process? The answer to that

question elicits some variation in opinions; but in large part, the author believes that the program is very successful. SFAS has provided the force with high quality soldiers from its inception. Finally, the environment has changed to make the best use of the attributes and skills Special Forces soldiers possess.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study examined the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course of today, and the author believes, he has answered the question as to whether or not a distinctively different selection program is required to select soldiers and officers with markedly different attributes, for *ARSOF Force XXI.*

The basic question: Is the Army using the right tools to recruit, assess, and select Special Forces soldiers to meet the future needs of *Force XXI,* has been analyzed in very considerable detail in chapter IV.

It was necessary at least in part, to turn to the current leadership and those immersed in the field of operations to acquire primary information. This was important to the study in that it provided first hand expertise from different perspectives. The results of this study do make it possible to make at least some recommendations for the future concerning the present assessment and selection process, and to reach some conclusions as to its continuing efficacy in meeting the needs of the twenty-first century.

Also necessary to the study, was the identification of factors related to the efficiency of the selection process and procedures used by the selection board. All of the information was compared and weighed with previous research annotated in the literature review, and compared against the new concepts involved in Regional Engagement, and *Force XXI.*

Recommendations

Recruiting

1. USAREC must identify potential Special Forces candidates from the soldiers' initial enlistment packet. The initial screening should be made there, and the soldier's success or failures should be tracked throughout his first term of enlistment, to guarantee the right soldier is assessed and selected for Special Forces qualification training.

2. Psychological screening must be completed during initial enlistment processing. This will inevitably save precious resources and retain only those most committed to becoming Special Forces soldiers. This will add a factor of reliability to psychological screening measures, because the profile of the soldier will have already been established.

3. Special Forces qualified non-commissioned officers from SFAS or the SFQC must accompany recruiting teams in order to add validity, prestige and commitment to the recruiting effort.

Assessing

1. SFAS must maintain its objectivity when providing assessments of soldiers. This can only work if the cadres are required to validate through the use of multi-media and interactive training programs. For example: Cadre must be able to observe an event conducted by an individual, or a group of candidates and write accurately what he observes. This can only be achieved through the use of multi-media support training packages.

2. An improved assessment index must be developed for the assessor observation report (OR). The OR presently utilized by SFAS does not supply the board with an effective measurement of the candidate's disposition during an event.

3. Peer reports should be given more weight, greater than that of the OR. Peer reports compared to the assessors' narrative offer the board the most significant decision making information.

Selecting

1. To improve the selection quality of Special Forces candidates the 1st Battalion commander, and the Training Group commander, should not participate on the selection board. An improvement would be to fill all board positions by invitation. Similar to promotion boards, officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers' form all five Special Forces Groups should participate on selection boards. This is important in that those selecting will have a vested interested in picking the best soldiers for the job. Undoubtedly, this will impact initially upon attrition, but will eventually play out to the benefit of the force. This is consistent with the current SOF imperative of not attempting to mass-produce Special Forces soldiers.

2. After a candidate is selected to attend the qualification course his performance file should move to the qualification course at the same time. This file together with the candidate's first term performance file would continue to enhance the quality of the soldiers selected.

Conclusions

The results from this study, as analyzed in chapter 4, coupled with the primary information and secondary data collected, provided guidance for recommendations as to how to improve the selection process for *ARSOF Force XXI.* In light of the information discovered, the Army could make some improvement, perhaps even significant improvement, upon the existing selection program.

Synthesizing the information provided in chapter IV, recognizing that cross-referencing each soldier's profile, from his initial enlistment through accession as a qualified Special Forces soldier, will insure that the branch selects for success in SFQC and in the field. In general, no further testing than that which is currently undertaken should be required. Other tests could be administered of course, such as the polygraph, and perhaps, other cognitive programs, but the benefit would be marginal from what is presently utilized and apparently working very well.

In a time of limited resources, any new concept requiring commitment of resources must be justifiable either in terms of efficiency (cost/resource savings) or a clear value added.

Under the auspices of *ARSOF Force XXI* and the context of Regional Engagement, ARSOF will constitute the bulk of the core regional engagement forces. As with joint SOF, ARSOF reflects the desired capabilities and characteristics for regional engagement. *ARSOF Vision 2010* lists the following traits of ARSOF (among others):

- Above average intelligence.
- Ability to deal with complex issues and situations.
- Ability to tolerate ambiguity.
- Emotional stability.
- High tolerance for stress.
- Flexibility.
- Self-discipline.
- Self-confidence.

A major important and underlying principle is that ARSOF can provide the core of regional engagement professionals that comprise the global scouts, strategic shapers, and operational combat outposts supported by and exercising command and control (C2) of supporting conventional forces. This tenet reflects the vision of General Dennis J. Reimer, Chief of Staff of the Army, when he stated, "To me, small ARSOF units

possessing the unique skills they possess could serve as the nucleus of a C2 element for Army After Next. They could well be the Army element of a standing joint task force and could serve as a command and control platform upon which we could hang capabilities we need" (ARSOF Vision 2010, 4).

In closing, General Reimer seems quite convinced that SF have selected the right people for the job and that the traits listed above embody what is an essential need in the Army's future SF soldiers, and in the Army of our future.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Special Forces Interview Outline

1. Do you feel that recently qualified Special Forces officers and soldiers assigned to your unit demonstrate the requisite skills and aptitude to succeed in any mission assigned?

2. Do you think that the onset of ARSOF Force XXI will require a change in the type of soldier or officer assigned to your unit? In other words, should a separate attribute set be developed for new Special Forces soldiers?

3. If you believe that new attribute sets should be developed for Special Forces what should they be?

4. How familiar are you with the current SFAS program and have you ever visited the course at Camp Makall, while a cycle was in session?

5. Are the operational detachments full?

6. What about the maturity level of the soldiers you are getting today compared to five or even ten years ago?

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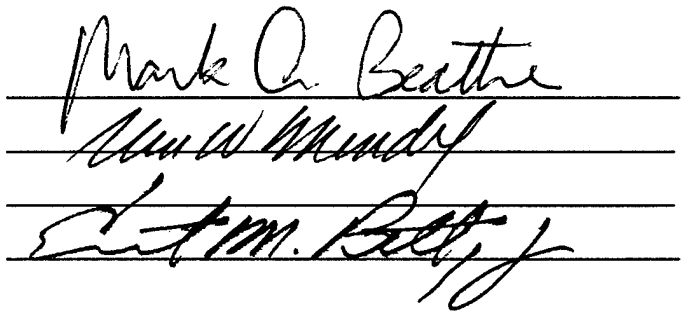

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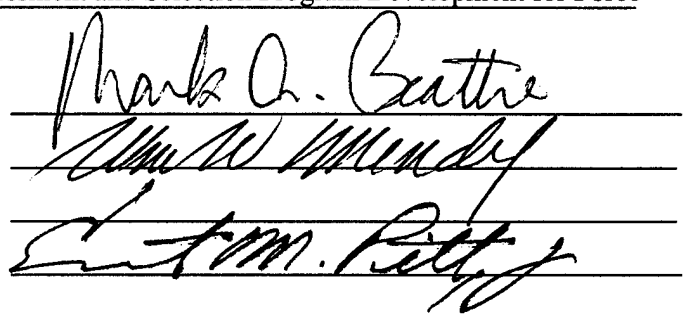

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